



THE GRRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 27

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 5, 2006

REMEMBER IN NOVEMBER



Traditionally, November is the month the church dedicates to the Holy Souls, when we remember our deceased relatives and friends.

During November the BOOK OF LIFE will be displayed at the back of the Church near the baptismal font & the Tree of Life. We pray that all the baptized will be raised to new life in Christ Jesus.

You are invited to take some time and add the names of your relatives or friends to the pages in the book.

THEO TIDBITS



Our second series has concluded but our third series is eagerly waiting in the wings!

On November 8 & 15, Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin will speak on The End... of Time.

If you've ever wondered about the Rapture, Armageddon or whether or not only 144,000 will be saved, then this is the session for you!!!

Mary-Anne will walk us through some of these end-time images from the Book of Revelation and help us to understand them more fully and hopefully more clearly!

PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY



You've heard a lot about it (hopefully), and know that the new parish photo directory is coming. We're slowly getting all the pieces into place. We have our planning committee, our phoning committee and are working at getting hosts and hostesses to help the company photographers when they arrive the first week of December.

The planning committee is meeting on November 6, and will call the members of the phoning committee shortly thereafter.

Beginning the weekend of November 11/12, we will have schedules at the back of the church for people to begin to sign up for their appointments. This makes it a little easier on the members of the phoning committee... not as many people to phone! The members of the phoning committee will begin to phone people on their list sometime after Remembrance Day.

The company photographer will be here from December 3 to December 9. On the weekdays, the photographer will be taking pictures between 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. On Saturday, he/she will be taking photographs between 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Hopefully everyone will be able to find a time that works for them!

Remember, if you sign up to get your picture taken for the photo directory, you receive a complimentary copy of the directory. You also have the option of buying a portrait package after the photo shoot, but are under no obligation to do so. If you do not sign up to get your picture taken for the directory, then you have to pay if you want a copy of the directory.



The parish photo directory is a great way for parishioners to become more familiar with each other. It's a wonderful way to build community and a lasting historical record of our parish. Check out our bulletin boards to see an example of our previous parish photo directory. And then make plans to say "yes" when you're invited to book an appointment!

ADVENT IS COMING!



Now that Halloween is over, we'll probably start seeing Christmas decorations in the stores and start hearing Christmas carols on the radio. But wait... Advent comes first!!! As we move through the month of November and the conclusion of Ordinary Time, we should try to remember that Advent is just around the corner, a liturgical season that has its own grace and peace and beauty.

Advent is a wonderful season of patient waiting and is rich in its own symbolism. One of the most popular is that of the Advent Wreath, a physical symbol of our anticipation as we light an extra candle each week.

Do you have an Advent Wreath? Maybe now is the time to look ahead and think about introducing this ancient custom into your home. There are some great resources on the internet. One site, that of St. Justin Martyr church, has some good instructions on how to make a wreath, how to use it and some of the symbolism involved. Take a look at it! We might include some instructions in the next Grrapevine... if we have space...

http://www.sjm87.org/advent_wreath.htm

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The visit to the Philippines has been a wonderful experience. The day after arriving, Vener, Rector and I left to visit their families, who live north of Manila. We also took time to play tourist, and drove to Vigan, along the north coast of Luzon. We have spent time in and around Manila and will also fly to the middle part of the country—to Cebu and area. So much to see and so little time! Sunday night and Monday morning I experienced a typhoon, although Manila did not get the worst part of it. The rain and the wind, even on the fringe of the typhoon, were quite amazing. Sunday will see me aboard Singapore Airlines over the Pacific, heading to Regina for a meeting. The holiday has been wonderful so far, and spending time with Rector and Vener, meeting their families and friends and seeing part of their country, is an experience to treasure.

Giselle: I spent the past weekend at Camp Emile up near Chetwynd, teaching the Lay Formation group there. Over the weekend, we received at least a foot of snow, and the drive back was very "interesting".

Over the next week or so, there are the usual RCIA and Religious Education classes, along with a Parish Pastoral Council Meeting and a Liturgy Committee meeting. On November 7, I've been invited to sit on a Christian panel in the Comparative Religions class at UNBC. The students get to ask the different panelists piercing questions!

FINDING OUR PLACE



Why do we fill up the seats in church from the back to the front? Maybe it's piety: We sit in the back because, aware of our many failings, we don't feel worthy to draw near. Maybe it's culture: We sit in the back because our mothers taught us never to claim the best seats or make ourselves the center of attention. Maybe it's selfish: We want to be able to skip out early. Whatever the reason, it causes a practical problem: The front seats are always empty, creating a gulf between the Lord's table and the Lord's people. And latecomers stand in the back rather than march up to the front where everyone can see that they're late.

Let's show some hospitality! Let's fill the church up from the front to the back, leaving the back rows for those who come later or late. And let's fill each row from the center: If you're the first one in a row, don't hug the end (unless you're a minister and will need to get in and out). Move into the middle so that others may come and sit beside you.

Filling in the front seats first isn't proud or arrogant. It's part of the ministry of hospitality that all of us who are baptized are called to exercise. It's a simple act of kindness that helps the church to gather better around its Lord, so that we may give God thanks and praise.

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A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

Are you interested in joining a group who will be studying *A Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren?? Give Nives Pastro a call at 562-1735 or contact the parish office.

UNLIKELY HEROES & HEROINES OF THE BIBLE

If you read the last edition of the



Grapevine, you know that a group of us are planning to dive a bit deeper into the books of Tobit, Judith and Jonah. We didn't have a time/date/location in the last edition, but we do now!!!

We are going to meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m., starting November 28, in the parish office meeting room.

We'll start off with the Book of Jonah, since it's fairly short and we can look at that in the few weeks before Christmas.

Now, you might be thinking... Jonah, big deal... he ran away from God, got swallowed by a fish, did the job he was asked to do and in the end God decided not to kill those nasty Ninevites. Well... yes... but theirs a lot more to the Book of Jonah than meets the eye.

The story isn't really about Jonah's miraculous adventure in the belly of a great fish, but in God's merciful compassion. A mercy that is so broad it can forgive even a city as cruel and inhumane as that of the repentant Ninevites. The story tells us that God isn't just concerned about the Chosen People, the Hebrews, but about the big wide world. And that message has a lot to say to us today, when we're tempted to say: God could never forgive those people or that country or that individual. Do we try to limit the mercy & compassion of God?

WEBSITE



Our website is a great place to find information on what's happening in the parish.

Generally speaking, it's updated about once a week, and includes information on upcoming events in the parish. Past events are also included. You can check out Fr. Richard's garden pictures, or take a look at how the seminarians are doing in the Philippines. See what the Creation Hikers did this summer.

You can even read past editions of the bulletin or Grapevine if you missed a copy somewhere along the line. Why not take a look! And if you have a bright idea... let us know!

www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Please remember the sick and suffering in our community and families, especially:



Marvin Lane
Kay McEwen
Joseph Glosser
(Kathy Labonte's father)
Beverly Teegee
Judy Nelson
Eugene Bachand
Nick Palfy
Sheila Livingstone
Don Binnie
Anne Whyte
Josephine Nykoluk
Kai Peterson
Sr. Margaret Quinn

REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We haven't had any baptisms, marriages or funerals in the last 2 weeks.

MINISTRIES IN OUR COMMUNITY: LECTORS

The ministry of Lector is one of the ministries that was called for in the documents of the Second Vatican Council as a ministry that belongs properly to the laity. It is not mandated as an extraordinary ministry to be undertaken if there is no member of the clergy available, but is undertaken in virtue of baptism.

To be a lector is to proclaim God's Word in the assembly, to share the Word of God with one's brothers and sisters, to assist the community to hear and be formed by the Word.

Essential to this ministry is the ability to read well, clearly and confidently in public. These are the "tools" needed for this ministry. Further, the Lector needs to take time to be formed by the Word. It is not enough simply to stand before the community and read what is set out on the page. In proclaiming the Word, the Lector is proclaiming what has been heard, absorbed and reflected upon. In other words, the lector first hears the Word of God, receives it, becomes familiar with it, allows it to form his or her life and then shares that Word with the community. That means taking time with God's Word, reading it, listening to it and reflecting on it. The Lector is sharing with the rest of the community what has become a precious gift to him or herself.

In proclaiming the Word of God to the community, the Lector becomes the voice that God uses to speak to the community gathered. Being creatures with many senses, we need to receive the Word through the senses. Since the Word is a spoken thing, we must receive it through the sense of hearing. Since the Word is spoken to the whole community, we need to hear it together, not just read it individually in our pews. The Lector gives voice to God's Word as we gather.



PURGATORY: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY, HOW??

During the month of November we pray for the souls of the faithful departed, and our thoughts naturally turn to the last things: heaven, hell and purgatory. We can generally grasp the concept of heaven and hell, but often run aground when we try to describe or understand purgatory. Before we try to explain what purgatory is, let's first take a look at what it is NOT!

Is purgatory a place of fire? Probably not. This idea seems to have arisen in the popular imagination from Dante's description of The Inferno.

Is purgatory a place? No, the church has never taught that it is a geographic place as such. When we die in this life, we move into a state that is beyond space and time.

Is purgatory a state of existence in which people spend a certain amount of time after death? No. Again, space and time are realities of this world, but not of the afterlife. When we speak of "temporal punishment due to sin", or indulgences that reduce temporal punishment, we're not talking about shortening time in purgatory, but easing the purification after death by an amount analogous to the shortening of an earthly penitential period by the number of days indicated.

So, what then is purgatory? It is an experience of purification and transformation which takes place at the moment of death. Through the process of purification we become capable of full unity with Christ and God, and capable of full union with the whole community of saints. In that moment, we come face to face with Love and are purged of everything within us that is not love. It's not a process to be feared or dreaded, but a step on the way to our eternal home and union with Divine Life and Love. During this month of November, we are encouraged to pray for the souls of the departed, for our prayers help them in their process of purification.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

There are several different options for marriage preparation:



For those sessions offered at St. Mary's, please contact the parish office to register. For the Engaged Encounter weekends, please call 964-2805 to register.

Nov 24 & 25

Friday evening & Saturday until about 8:30 p.m. (with meals) at St. Mary's

Jan 24 to Mar 7

Six Wednesday evening sessions at St. Mary's

Mar 23-26

Engaged Encounter Weekend

May 11-13

Engaged Encounter Weekend

DEVELOPMENT & PEACE

On December 9 & 10, Fr. Ken Forster, OMI, will be a guest speaker here at St. Mary's. Fr. Ken spent almost ten years ministering in Kenya, where the Oblates had been asked to take on a new mission. One of the main concerns of the people in that area is the need for a ready supply of potable water. Over the years, the Oblates and their supporters helped the communities in Kenya build and install a water system. Fr. Ken will speak about the project and the need for water. He will also be soliciting donations to help in the work in Kenya. More details in the next issue.



DAILY PROPHET: ZEPHANIAH THE BRAVE

The last we heard from the tiny kingdom of Judah... things weren't going too well. King Hezekiah had stood up to the Assyrians and received a serious drubbing at their hands. The kingdom of Israel had been carried off into Exile and things weren't looking too promising for Judah. Hezekiah's son, Manasseh assumed the throne of Judah next, and ruled for a mind-numbing



55 years. He was what the Jews would call a "bad" king! He re-introduced the worship of false gods, rebuilt all the pagan shrines and altars that his father had torn down, consulted magicians and astrologers, murdered many innocent people and even sacrificed his own son to some pagan god. To be fair, he had been forced to pledge loyalty to the Assyrians and may even have been forced to build shrines to various Assyrian gods as a sign of his loyalty... but still!! During his reign, things were fairly peaceful for Judah, at least politically. They were a vassal state of Assyria and did not endure any invasions, but at the same time, the people were stripped of many of their rights and there was an overall decline in religious devotion to Yahweh. It didn't pay politically to be a Yahwehist! This period, from about 700 to 650 BC was a time from which no prophetic voices have survived. Maybe they existed and were silenced. Maybe their words were never recorded. Prophecy does make a comeback however, around the year 640, with the advent of Zephaniah and Nahum.

Zephaniah prophesied from about 640 to 620 BC, most of it during the reign of King Josiah, the grandson of Manasseh. Josiah, unlike his father and grandfather, was a good king, who began to implement religious reforms in Judah during this period. He probably felt that Judah could breathe a little easier, for the Assyrian empire was undergoing some internal turmoil, suffering repeated attacks from the up and coming Babylonians. Concerned with their own survival, Assyria turns a blind eye to what the back-water province of Judah is doing.

Faced with the aftermath of Manasseh's idolatry, Zephaniah expresses vehement wrath against pagan practices and Assyria. For Zephaniah, the Day of the Lord is fast approaching, and he proclaims several oracles against Judah and enemy nations. Zephaniah warns that all who do not repent of their idolatry will be swept away. His message ends with a promise of hope that Yahweh will purify Israel, restore all those who have been sent into exile and give peace to the land.

Unlike some of his predecessors, Zephaniah is not concerned with social injustice or the poor. His primary focus is on the pagan worship of false gods. And Zephaniah isn't afraid to speak his message loudly, with courage and bravery, even against royalty.

LISTENING CENTRES

Several of the Listening Centres that began with the OMI Mission in November 2005 are still meeting on a regular basis. They would welcome interested participants! Listed below are the active Listening Centres for St. Mary's Parish:

Suzanne Lefebvre	964-9580	College Hts.
Terry Bopp	564-2635	Westwood
Janice Haddock	563-0159	Ospika & Massey
Tom Makowsky	564-3838	Spruceland
Paul Laliberte	563-8465	Tabor & 1 st Ave
Angie Hoksbergen	562-9844	10 th & Freeman
Dorothy Reimer	562-3749	Central
Tony Cue	962-8680	Hart Hwy.

BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR INFANTS

Our next baptism preparation session for parents who wish their infants or young children (under 5 years old) to be baptized, will be held on January 17 & 18, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. Parents are expected to attend both sessions. Please phone the parish office ahead of time to register—564-4097